



NEWS RELEASE

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UP AND RUNNING ALEE ACADEMY EUSTIS CAMPUS OPENS DOORS WITH HELP FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

EUSTIS, FL, August 3, 2004 — While most Lake County schools will begin the new academic year on August 5, the Alee Academy Charter School Eustis Campus opened its doors a few days early. “Back to school” took on a different meaning today as the new charter school in Eustis, Florida celebrated a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house.

Helping to commemorate the event were city and county officials, the Alee Academy Charter School Board of Directors, school staff members and representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, as well as students, parents and members of the community. The Alee Academy, which had been operating as a public charter school in a leased facility, serves a primarily rural population, providing educational opportunities for at-risk students ages 15-19.

The \$2 million facility project is being funded through a USDA Rural Development loan guarantee of \$1,900,000. “The Alee Academy is a collaborative effort between the school, the county and the community that demonstrates leadership and vision,” said Charles W. Clemons, Sr., USDA Rural Development State Director. “Rural Development is proud to be a part of this innovative state-of-the-art facility that will make an ongoing difference to families in rural Lake County.”

The new 15,000 square foot facility is located on five acres of a larger 31 acre tract and will accommodate approximately 250 students, an increase over the 210 students currently served. In addition to eight classrooms, shared teacher offices and administrative space, the ADA accessible building will include a cafeteria/common use space and a conference room. The Alee Academy charter school offers an individualized curriculum in English, math, sciences and social studies as well as electives.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities and is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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